

Week Ending Friday, June 23, 2000

**Interview With Rebecca Rankin of
VH1 in New York City**

June 16, 2000

“VH1 Save The Music”

Ms. Rankin. “VH1 Save The Music,” you’ve been involved for a while. When did you first hear about the program, and why did it draw you?

The President. Well, I’m trying to remember whether I first heard about it from my wife or whether I read something about it. But I actually wrote a letter to John Sykes because I was so excited about what they were doing. I had been in school music when I was a young person, starting at the age of 9. And I had been really, really upset about all these schools dropping their music programs when I was Governor. And Hillary and I redid the school standards in Arkansas. We tried very hard to protect the music programs and the arts programs and the physical education programs for the people who weren’t in team sports. And so I realized that all over the country these schools were under more and more financial pressure, and they thought that maybe the path of least resistance was just to get rid of the music programs. And so here was someone trying to do something about it. I was just thrilled, and I wanted to help.

Ms. Rankin. Very cool. Growing up—I know, I’ve watched a lot of tapes on you. We did “Rock and Roll President” a while back with you.

The President. Yes, in 1992. I loved it.

Ms. Rankin. Exactly. They gave me a copy of that. Music education was really important to you, obviously, growing up—

The President. Really important.

Ms. Rankin. —and music was really important. Looking at where you are now, arguably one of the most important people on the planet, what did music education do for you, and how has it come to play in your life now?

The President. Well, first of all, it gave me an outlet for all this energy I had. It gave me a constructive way to be creative. It also taught me discipline, and it taught me that to create something beautiful required hard work and discipline. It taught me how to be—to create alone, and also how to work with a group, in a band, a jazz band or a combo. And it made me happy. I mean, it just made me happy. It’s such a wonderful—when I was a kid and I’d have a tough time, as long as I could play, I could always be okay. I could just be in a private place. And it fueled my imagination. And it gave me an appreciation of things in life that has stayed with me to the present day.

I can still go in my music room that Hillary built me upstairs in the White House and play for 15 or 20 minutes, and all the cares of the world go away.

**Congressional Resolution on Music
Education**

Ms. Rankin. Very nice. So you guys have got to remember that when you’re playing. Mr. Clinton said it.

Let’s talk about, there was a resolution passed in Congress a few days ago, unanimous resolution saying that music education was extremely important. Why is it so important that this was passed, and what’s it going to do in the future?

The President. Well, I think it was important that it was passed because it shows that the Representatives of the people of both parties have now—are acknowledging that it’s important, and it’s a problem because there are so many schools that don’t offer it anymore. And I think it will tend to increase public awareness of this, public support for maintaining the music programs.

The President’s Advisory Commission on Music and the Arts did a study a couple of years ago, and Hillary was the honorary chair

of the committee. They found that local pressure, parental involvement, community involvement was the single most important factor in either keeping or restoring music programs to the schools. And so I think that's why it matters.

I think also, though, the Congress and the President have a responsibility to keep putting as much money out there to the schools to pay for their other expenses as possible—the buildings, the teachers to have smaller classes—so the schools will have the money they need for the music programs.

But, you know, there's lots and lots of research on this now which shows that if a good school music program increases academic performance, that a lot of young people learn in different ways and are dramatically stimulated by music. So that's another reason we ought to be for this. It actually will help the overall learning enterprise.

Ms. Rankin. Yes. That's an important point because I think everybody thinks of it as just an art, and it stops there—

The President. Not true.

“VH1 Save The Music”

Ms. Rankin. —and it's culture and it carries through.

We've had a lot of artists helping us this week with “VH1 Save The Music” week and the “Today Show.” Mariah Carey was out yesterday; A.J. McLean from the Backstreet Boys; the Goo Goo Dolls. Today we have Bon Jovi playing at the “Today Show” in Rockefeller Center. Are you a Bon Jovi fan?

The President. I love Bon Jovi. I really—I think he's great. I'm a music fan of his. I like his acting. He's doing very well in the movies now. And he's a marvelous young man. He's been to the White House to visit Hillary and me on several occasions. He's really—he's a very nice man. And I'm pleased for his success, and I'm grateful that he's helping today.

Ms. Rankin. What does it say to the public to have such important sort of star power behind a program like “VH1 Save The Music?”

The President. Well, I hope that it increases the public's awareness. I hope it says, hey, this is really important. I mean, these people could all be doing something else. And I hope it says to them, if all these people

who do music for a living think it's important for all our kids to have access to music, maybe it is.

Ms. Rankin. All right. These guys—do you go to this school, P.S. 96?

Audience members. Yes.

Ms. Rankin. All right, so the program and what's happening with the New York City school boards and public education, and music and what's going on here today—can you talk a little bit about what's being presented today and what's going to—

The President. Yes. If you look at these students here, VH1 has given them these instruments. So they're going to start a music program. Now, just a couple of years ago, this school had one of the worst performances in New York. And they've gone from having 80 percent of their kids not read at grade level to having three-quarters of their kids read at or above grade level in only 2 years. So they want this school to be one of the best schools in New York.

They have a school uniform policy, as you see, which is a very positive thing, I think. And now they want a music program. And what they know is not only will these children learn music and they'll enjoy it; it will further increase the academic performance of this school.

So I think they're all excited about it, and they're all proud of their school—aren't you?

Audience members. Yes.

Ms. Rankin. It's just kind of exciting to have President Clinton here, too, right? Oh, yes, just a little.

Audience member. An honor.

Ms. Rankin. An honor. A big honor.

One last thing. TV moments, music moments on television—what stands out in your mind as a huge one growing up, present day?

The President. When the Beatles were on Ed Sullivan. When Elvis Presley was on Ed Sullivan. I think those two things, when I was very young, made a big impression on me.

Ms. Rankin. Cool. All right. Thank you very much. I think you have to go back downstairs. So—[laughter]—these are things I can't see, but I think my 5 minutes are up.

Thank you so much. It was such an honor.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 8:40 a.m. in Classroom 200 at the Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public

School 96) and was videotaped for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to John Sykes, president, VH1. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Reporting on the Deployment of
United States Military Personnel as
Part of the Kosovo International
Security Force**

June 16, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of December 15, 1999, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. military personnel as the U.S. contribution to the NATO-led security force (KFOR) in Kosovo. Additional U.S. personnel are also deployed in countries in the region and serve as support for our forces in Kosovo. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to establish the international security presence in Kosovo in U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244 of June 10, 1999, for an initial period of 12 months, to continue thereafter unless the Security Council decides otherwise. The mission of KFOR is to provide a military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY); enforce the terms of the agreement of the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to demilitarize and reintegrate itself into civil society; provide operational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) by providing, until UNMIK or appropriate local organizations assume these functions, for public safety and order and border monitoring.

Currently, the U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is approximately 7,500 U.S. mili-

tary personnel. This number once again will decrease to approximately 6,000 U.S. military personnel when ongoing troop rotations are completed. In the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 20 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered around Gnjilane in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment is the primary military task. United States forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately one-half of KFOR's total available personnel is directly committed to protection tasks, including protection of the ethnic minorities. The KFOR forces are under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

In addition, other U.S. military personnel are deployed to other countries in the region to serve in administrative and logistics support roles for the U.S. forces in KFOR. Specifically, approximately 1,000 U.S. military personnel are operating in support of KFOR in Macedonia, Greece, and Albania.

Since my report to the Congress of December 15, in accordance with UNSCR 1244 and the MTA, FRY military, paramilitary, and police forces have not reentered Kosovo. The KLA agreed on June 21, 1999, to a cease fire, to withdraw from the zones of conflict in Kosovo, and to demilitarize itself. On September 20, 1999, KFOR Commander Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson accepted the KLA's certification that the KLA had completed its demilitarization in accordance with the June 21 agreement. The UNMIK thereafter established a civil emergency services entity known as the Kosovo Protection Corps that is intended to provide civic assistance in emergencies and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

The UNMIK has made progress in establishing an interim administration for the people of Kosovo. The KFOR, within its means and capabilities, is providing broad support to UNMIK. As UNMIK is still developing its structures in Kosovo, KFOR continues to